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### The British Foreign Office

THE more closely knit the various countries of the world become, the more important is the conduct of foreign policy.

Before the invention of the cable and the telegraph, the ambassador or minister stationed at a post many miles from home exercised great independence and discretion. The occasion frequently arose, when, owing to the impossibility of consulting immediately his foreign office, he would be obliged to make commitments of importance upon his own responsibility and judgment. Today the situation is somewhat different. The diplomatic representative of a government is in daily, almost hourly, communication with his foreign office. Obviously, therefore, the success of the foreign policy of a government must depend to a larger degree than formerly upon the individual ability of the foreign office staff and the efficiency of foreign office administration.

When a foreign office is understaffed, when its personnel is overworked, the result upon policy may be disastrous. Tired and nervous men do not usually make wise

decisions. Professor Fay describes the two weeks before the outbreak of the World War as follows: "Everywhere in the Foreign Offices of Europe, responsible officials now began to fall under a terrible physical and mental strain of overwork, worry, and lack of sleep, whose inevitable psychological consequences are too often overlooked in assessing the blame for the events which followed. But if one is to understand how it was that experienced and trained men occasionally failed to grasp fully the sheaves of telegrams put into their hands at frequent intervals, how their proposals were sometimes confused and misunderstood, how they quickly came to be obsessed with pessimistic fears and suspicions, and how in some cases they finally broke down and wept, one must remember the nerve-racking psychological effects of continued work and loss of sleep, combined with the consciousness of the responsibility for the safety of their country and the fate of millions of lives."\*

Mr. William T. Stone, in a Special Supple-

\*Fay, S. B., *The Origins of the World War*, Vol. II, p. 288.

ment to the *Information Service* which will be published next week, has made an analysis of the Administration of the Department of State in Washington. He points out that the Congress of the United States, while making provision for the Foreign Service in the Rogers Act of 1924, has failed to extend the act to the Department of State—the official source of our foreign policy. He also shows that in order to maintain an adequate and permanent staff in Washington the State Department is in need of increased appropriations and reorganization. (*Mr. Stone's study will be released February 11th.*)

This report, which has been written by Raymond Leslie Buell, Director of Research of the *Foreign Policy Association*, after an investigation of the British Foreign Office in London, is a companion study to Mr. Stone's. Its purpose is to review briefly and analyze the organization and functioning of the British Foreign Office both as an aid to an understanding of British foreign policy and for its comparative value in understanding the needs of our own Department of State.

One of the first problems suggested by this report is whether or not the Foreign Office should be kept distinct from the Foreign Service, or whether the two organizations should be amalgamated. It points out that while before the war the British Government kept the two services distinct, they are now amalgamated, with a result which is generally recognized as satisfactory.

In the American State Department, no system has yet been installed for the examination and promotion of State Department (as distinct from Foreign Service) personnel. This report shows that candidates for the British Foreign Office must pass a written examination of a cultural nature, the questions for which are set and marked by university professors. In addition they must submit to an oral examination by a Board of Selection which contains, in addition to diplomatic representatives, members of Parliament and other non-departmental members. Promotion is in the hands of a Promotion Board, but the discretion of this board is reduced by the fact that promotion is by seniority until the higher grades in

the service are reached. The Foreign Office has a stability in personnel which is lacking in the State Department of the United States. The vacancies are very few in number.

The financial administration of the Foreign Office is in the hands of the Chief Clerk, holding the rank of Assistant Secretary of State. He has charge of all personnel or establishment matters. In this department is a Finance Officer, holding the rank of Counsellor, who handles questions of finance.

Perhaps the most unique feature of British Foreign Office administration is the systematic use made of information. Telegrams and dispatches are periodically brought together in a Confidential Print, which is sent to every British embassy throughout the world. An annual index is published of current diplomatic dispatches. The Library prepares at the request of the political department concerned political memoranda giving the historical background of any pending question.

Despite the effort to make the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service more democratic, it seems that its personnel is still recruited from a limited social class. Although the party for the moment in power in theory makes decisions as to foreign policy, the permanent officials in the Foreign Office have their views and naturally have a great influence upon the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in regard to matters upon which the party has not committed itself. Within the Labor party at least there is a feeling that the permanent officials have altogether too much influence in policy. Some students advocate that the position of Parliamentary Under Secretary of State should be strengthened, or that the continental *cabinet* system should be introduced, i. e., the Foreign Secretary should bring with him into the Foreign Office a number of private secretaries having an expert knowledge of foreign affairs and knowing the Secretary's general political views. The opposite situation seems to exist in the United States where the State Department has not yet been able to build up a permanent staff of nonpartisan political officials.

## CONSOLIDATION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE FOREIGN SERVICE

At the present time the British Foreign Service is composed of the Diplomatic Service, the Commercial Diplomatic Service, and the Consular Service.<sup>1</sup> The general supervision of all these services is entrusted to the British Foreign Office, although it delegates much of its responsibility in regard to the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service to the Department of Overseas Trade.<sup>2</sup> The authorized diplomatic establishment consists of eleven Ambassadors, thirty Ministers, fifteen Counsellors, twenty-eight First Secretaries, and forty-one Second and Third Secretaries—a total of one hundred and twenty-five diplomatic representatives in the field. These representatives receive their orders, however, from sixty-five or seventy diplomatic officials in the Foreign Office in London.<sup>3</sup>

Before 1921 the Foreign Office, which supervises the Foreign Service, whether Diplomatic and Consular, was a distinct organization in itself. Although there was an occasional exchange of personnel between Downing Street and the field, the two services were entirely separate, just as are the State Department and the Foreign Service in the United States today.

For many years there was criticism of the system whereby officials who finally determined policy at home never visited the field. In reporting in favor of interchange between the two services, the 1861 Select Committee declared: "To the clerk in the Foreign Office, service abroad would give or retain the familiarity with foreign languages which is so rare in this country . . . . It would impart an interest to his daily labor, which no merely documentary

knowledge can ever supply—and it would cultivate and enlarge his understanding."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Trevelyan declared in the House of Commons, February 23, 1877:

"It is of the highest moment that our representatives abroad should possess this general grasp of our National policy as a whole which can only be acquired by familiarity with the daily work of the Foreign Office."<sup>5</sup>

As Sir Robert Morier once said, members of the Diplomatic Service should be kept in touch with the *national* point of view—that is, with the feeling of their own country; while members of the Foreign Office should acquire an *international* point of view. Indefinite residence in diplomatic courts abroad did much, according to some observers, to demoralize certain members of the service.

At the close of the World War, and apparently as a result of the recommendations of the MacDonnell Commission, the Foreign Office and the Foreign Service were amalgamated.<sup>6</sup>

All members of the combined service are liable for service at home or abroad. As a rule, successful candidates are sent into the field to gain experience. Upon attaining the rank of First Secretary, usually after five or ten years' service, a member is definitely allocated either to the Foreign Office or to the Diplomatic Service—according to suitability—but even then transfers may take place.<sup>7</sup>

The importance attached to Foreign Office posts is indicated by the fact that the British Ambassador at Berlin, Sir Ronald Lindsay, was recently brought home to serve as Permanent Under Secretary of

1. For the Commercial Diplomatic Service, cf. p. 467.

2. Cf. p. 467.

3. Before 1914 independent means was an essential for the Diplomatic Service because of the small salaries paid and the absence of representative allowances. In fact the government required an independent income from diplomatic candidates of £400 and also required a successful candidate to serve as attaché for two years without pay.

Following the World War the independent income requirement and the grade of unpaid attaché were abolished; salaries were increased; and the representation allowance introduced. An ambassador now receives a salary of \$17,500 and a representation allowance which, in the case of the British Ambassador at Washington, amounts to an additional \$67,500 a year. The salary of an American ambassador is \$12,500. The Rogers Act authorized representation allowances but no appropriations for such allowances have yet been made. The salary of a British minister is \$10,000 a year.

4. *Report from the Select Committee on Diplomatic Service*, July 23, 1861, p. xiv.

5. *House of Commons Debates*, February 23, 1877, col. 899; cf. also *Mr. Ponsonby's Memorandum*, Cd. 7748, p. 318.

6. The administration of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service has been fundamentally influenced by the recommendations of various Select Committees and Royal Commissions. In 1861 a Select Committee headed by Mr. Monckton Milnes made a report upon the service. A House of Commons Select Committee made a report on the service in May 1871, the recommendations of which formed the basis of the service for the next 20 years. Between 1886 and 1890 the Ridley Commission carried on a searching inquiry into the whole British Civil Service. And in 1914 the MacDonnell Commission of Inquiry into the British Civil Service published a report on the Foreign Service. Cf. *Fifth Report*, Cd. 7748; *Appendix to the Fifth Report of the Commissioners*, Cd. 7749 (1914), for the minutes of evidence.

7. Article 3, Diplomatic Regulations.

State, while Sir William Tyrrell, who had held that post, was appointed British Ambassador to Paris. Few, if any, of the fears that complete amalgamation and interchange of the two services would lead to discontinuity of policy and inefficiency have been realized. It seems to be agreed that the present system gives a unity of purpose to men in the office and men in

the field, that it keeps Foreign Service officials in touch with the home country so that they do not forget they are Englishmen, and that it instills into the Foreign Office an air of reality born of experience abroad. The bitterness and rivalry which at one time existed between the men at home and the men in the field has disappeared.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE

At the head of each department in the British Government is a political minister who belongs to a Cabinet responsible to Parliament. When the Cabinet loses its majority the minister resigns and another takes his place. The minister is merely the keystone in the arch of the government. The brick and mortar in the arch consists of nonpartisan permanent officials who have entered the service via a civil service examination, and who have made public service a career. These permanent officials are the product of English universities and "public schools," and of a tradition of public service which has given England one of the best systems of administration in the world. The permanent head of each governmental department is the Permanent Under Secretary of State. Some of these Under Secretaries have been extraordinary men who have played an unusually influential if little known part in British public life. The permanent head of the Treasury, the most important branch of the administration, is the head of the entire civil service.

Thus the Foreign Office has two types

of official: (1) the temporary political official who represents the view of the party in power and is responsible for the determination of policy; and (2) the permanent official who is responsible for the day-by-day work of the office and the accurate handling of facts, and who may make recommendations as to policy. The actual interplay between the political "amateurs" and the nonpartisan experts will be discussed later.

The political officials in the Foreign Office are:

1. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
2. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The first is a minister in the Cabinet and receives a salary of £5,000; the second official, whose duties are later defined, receives a salary of £1,500.

The permanent officials belonging to the regular diplomatic establishment may be listed as follows:

	Salary <sup>8</sup>
1. Permanent Under Secretary of State .....	£3,000
2. Deputy Under Secretary of State .....	2,200
3. Two Assistant Under Secretaries of State .....	£1,200 - 1,500
4. Fifteen Counsellors .....	1,000 - 1,200
5. Nineteen First Secretaries .....	700 - 900
6. Thirty Second and Third Secretaries .....	200 - 500

As a rule each political department is headed by a Counsellor and staffed by secretaries. The Private Secretary to the Secretary of State and the Finance Officer also have the rank of Counsellors.

In addition, there are a number of officers who have been given special appointments; i. e., they have not been obliged to take the civil service examination nor have they arrived at their present posts through promotion from the Foreign Office ranks. They are as follows:

8. As of 1928, and exclusive of the cost of living bonus.



- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Two Legal Advisers .....             | £1,200 - 1,500         |
| 2. Two Assistant Legal Advisers .....   | 700 - 900              |
| 3. Librarian and Keeper of Papers ..... | 800 - 1,000            |
| 4. Finance Officer .....                | salary of a Counsellor |
| 5. Head of the News Department .....    | salary of a Counsellor |

The legal advisers, Sir Cecil Hurst and Mr. Herbert Wm. Malkin, were appointed from the Bar; the Librarian, Mr. Stephen Gaselee, was formerly Librarian of Magdalene College, Cambridge; the News Department is headed by a former journalist, Sir Arthur Willert.<sup>9</sup>

#### POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

The Foreign Office contains the following political departments:

1. **American and African**  
Dealing with North, South and Central America, Liberia, the Liquor Traffic and the Slave Trade.
2. **Central**  
Dealing with Franco-German relations, Central European countries, and problems arising out of the peace treaties.
3. **Eastern**  
Dealing with Turkey, Persia and the Hedjaz.
4. **Egyptian**  
Dealing with Egypt, the Sudan, Abyssinia, and Tripoli.
5. **Far Eastern**  
Dealing with China, Japan, Siam, and the Traffic in Dangerous Drugs.
6. **Northern**  
Dealing with Soviet Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Afghanistan.
7. **Western**  
Dealing with France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Morocco, the New Hebrides, and the League of Nations. General.<sup>10</sup>
8. **Dominions Information**  
Information on foreign policy for the Dominions; Inter-Imperial relations.

The duties of these departments are self-evident. They keep informed regarding the international problems of the region of the world to which the department re-

lates and make recommendations in regard to questions involving these regions.

#### NON-POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

The Foreign Office also has a number of non-political departments:

1. Communications Department.
2. News Department.
3. Passport Office.
4. Treaty Department.
5. Office of the Legal Adviser.
6. Office of the Librarian and Keeper of the Papers.
7. Office of the Chief Clerk.
8. Consular Department.

#### THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Communications Department has two functions. The first is the deciphering of telegrams<sup>11</sup> and the second is the Messenger Service. A King's Foreign Messenger is responsible for the safe delivery of State papers from the Foreign Office to British diplomatic posts abroad. Seventy-five or a hundred years ago this position was important and dangerous because of the absence of modern communications. The development of such facilities has diminished the importance of these messengers, and by 1914 the number had been reduced to seven. At present the King's Messengers and the Communications Department are merged into a single service. The personnel spends part of its time in the office coding and decoding telegrams and the remainder in carrying dispatches to certain foreign posts. At present messengers are sent only to those posts which are not served by a regular system of communication by British ships. Where British shipping lines are available the diplomatic pouch is delivered to the British captain who locks it in the ship's safe and at its destination delivers it to a representative of the British mission. The great care with

9. From 1920 to December 1928, the position of Historical Adviser was filled by Mr. Headlam-Morley, but upon his retirement the office was discontinued, as its work can now be performed by other departments, particularly the Library.

10. There are also two assistants to the British delegate to the League of Nations. They attend the meetings of the Assembly; and one member attends every other meeting or conference of any importance held by the League. The Western Department deals with other branches of the government in regard to League matters and has general control of policy. Nevertheless, other departments, such as the Ministry of Labor, for example, may communicate directly with Geneva.

11. Described in connection with the Registry.

which the British diplomatic pouch is handled explains why, despite the all-inclusive confidential print system<sup>12</sup> very little information "leaks" from the British Diplomatic Service. The Communications Department has a personnel of fifteen permanent and ten temporary officials.

#### THE NEWS DEPARTMENT

Before the World War the Foreign Office had no system for the distribution of news to the press. Journalists had their friends at the office, and, according to some critics, a journalist obtaining information from this source was usually expected to support the foreign policy of the government.<sup>13</sup>

During the World War the importance of public opinion was recognized, and a system for giving out news regardless of the views of the journalist was established.<sup>14</sup>

Since then this policy has been maintained and broadened. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs seldom holds press conferences, nor is any diplomatic officer allowed to give information officially to the press. The sole official source for information is the News Department, headed by a former journalist, Sir Arthur Willert, who is assisted by several diplomatic secretaries and temporary clerks. Any journalist may come with a request to the News Department at any time, regardless of his views. If the News Department does not have the information, it at once consults with the head of the political department concerned, and, if the information is not confidential, it is given out. By this system information is sometimes given to the press (which prints it under its own rather than Foreign Office responsibility), which would not be given in answer to a formal question in the House of Commons. The News Department does not issue press releases; it gives out information informally as it is requested.

It is customary for the News Department to send a member to all important confer-

ences abroad, including the Assembly and Council Meetings of the League of Nations. At conferences whose meetings are secret, such as the Coolidge Naval Conference at Geneva, this representative of the News Department may become the only source of information for the correspondents.<sup>14a</sup>

For the purpose of following opinion abroad, the News Department supports a number of press attachés at the more important embassies; it also supervises the work of the British Library of Information in New York.

#### THE PASSPORT OFFICE

The duties of this office are similar to those of any passport office and concern immigration more than foreign policy.

#### TREATY DEPARTMENT

The title of this department is perhaps misleading. Except for extradition agreements it does not draft treaties nor does it pass upon the legal phraseology of treaties as a whole. Ordinary treaties are usually drafted in the political department concerned<sup>15</sup> (with exception of commercial treaties which are drafted by the Board of Trade) and tightened up by the Legal Adviser. The Treaty Department deals with the technical aspect of treaty negotiations, such as the formalities and ceremonies dealing with their conclusion and ratification. It handles such ceremonial matters as obtaining the King's signature to Royal Commissions and the drafting and actual writing out by hand of royal letters that pass between the Sovereign and the heads of other States.<sup>16</sup>

The Treaty Department also handles questions of "protocol," such as diplomatic precedence at ceremonies and dinners. The Protocol relating to the Court is, however, partly handled by an Assistant Vice-Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps. He acts as liaison officer between the Foreign Office and the Royal Household. The Treaty Depart-

12. Cf. p. 465.

13. Cf. Cd. 7749, *op. cit.*, Question 40,611.

14. Cf. *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, Ward & Gooch, Vol. III, Chapter VIII. Cecil, Algernon, "The Foreign Office," p. 628.

14a. *House of Commons Debates*, March 14, 1928. Col. 1889.

15. Cf. p. 474.

16. Sir Eyre Crowe, Cd. 7749, p. 22.

ment handles many other questions, such as nationality, and those arising in regard to territorial waters out of the Hague Conference, passport control, and certain aspects of diplomatic protection.

There are no professional lawyers in the Treaty Department. Nevertheless, the eleven officers have, through their association with the department, acquired a large amount of technical knowledge. Apparently this department performs some of the work done by the Solicitor's Office in the State Department of the United States.

#### OFFICE OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

There are two Legal Advisers and two Assistants in this office. They do not initiate policy, but merely advise the political officers of the departments upon problems as they arise. The head of a political department minutes all draft dispatches involving legal questions to the Legal Advisers for their comments. The Legal Advisers tighten treaties drafted by the political department; they also handle claims and usually act as the British agent before a claims commission. Thus Mr. Montague Shearman, Assistant Legal Adviser, represented the British Foreign Office before the Anglo-Mexican Claims Commission.<sup>17</sup>

In the more important arbitration cases, such as the Fur Seals arbitration and in the cases before the International Court of Justice at the Hague, it is customary to employ special counsel. In about six or seven cases a year the Legal Adviser asks the assistance of the Law Officers of the Crown. And the Attorney General sometimes personally argues important arbitration cases.<sup>18</sup> But Sir Cecil Hurst, the Legal Adviser, also argues important cases.

In other matters the Law Officers of the Treasury may be employed. Especially in view of the necessity of drafting treaties so as to recognize the new status of the Dominions, it is the practice to appoint the

Legal Adviser as a member of the British delegation to every international conference, including those held at Geneva.

Altogether the Legal Advisers of the Foreign Office—only four in number in comparison with 21 Assistant Solicitors in the State Department of the United States—enjoy the reputation of being highly competent international lawyers. Such a small staff is able to perform the legal work of the Foreign Office, first, because it is highly competent; second, because duties, which in other foreign offices are performed by the legal staff, are handled by the Treaty and other departments of the British Foreign Office; and finally because of the co-operation between the legal staffs of the various departments such as the Law Officers, the Treasury and the Board of Trade.

#### OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN AND KEEPER OF THE PAPERS

This department, which is one of the most important administrative departments in the Foreign Office, has the following duties:

1. The acquisition, custody and arrangement of printed books and papers.
2. The publication of Parliamentary papers relating to foreign affairs and the annual volume of *British and Foreign State Papers*.
3. The preparation of political memoranda.
4. The administration of the Foreign Office Registry; i. e., the opening, dispatching and custody of correspondence; preparation of the Confidential Print; compilation of Annual Index.

The Library contains between 60,000 and 70,000 volumes, and spends between £200 and £300 a year on books, including monthly magazines. It does not attempt, however, to follow thoroughly the magazines or newspapers. A few foreign journals are taken, such as the *American Foreign Affairs*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, as well as such technical journals as the *American Journal of International Law*. The latter are, however, kept in the Legal Adviser's office. Responsibility for general information as to the political literature for foreign countries, is placed not upon the Library but upon the diplomatic missions abroad.

17. *Times* (London) July 30, 1928.

18. Cf. the instance of Sir Douglass Hogg who argued the British case before the Permanent Court of International Justice in regard to the Tunis Nationality decree, *Collection of Advisory Opinions*, No. 4, 1923.

The Library is responsible for the publication of the admirable "Command" papers relating to foreign affairs which include diplomatic correspondence and the British treaty series. These papers are indexed with a serial number, thus constituting a workable set of documents. The only other publication of the Foreign Office is the annual volume of *British and Foreign State Papers*, which is an excellent collection of treaties and diplomatic correspondence relating to various governments.<sup>19</sup>

Political Memoranda. Any department in the Foreign Office may call upon the Library for a statement of precedents or a historical analysis of the facts in regard to any pending question of foreign policy. The Library bases these memoranda primarily upon official dispatches,<sup>20</sup> but in part on secondary unofficial sources.

Political memoranda may deal with the widest range of subjects, from the status of foreign loans in Haiti to a history of the Straits question. In 1850 a member of the House of Commons made a formal motion, divided into forty headings, attacking Lord Palmerston's foreign policy over the period from 1827 to 1847. It was the task of the Librarian and his staff to furnish the material for the reply, a task which required the searching of from 2,000 to 3,000 manuscript volumes.<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Lewis Hertslet, who was Foreign Office Librarian from 1810 to 1854, became recognized during this period as an outstanding authority on international and historical questions; and so valuable were his memoranda that one Secretary of State called him "the walking state paper." This story is told of Hertslet's memorandum on the policy to be followed by the British Government at the close of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. Hertslet prepared this memorandum at the request of Lord Beaconsfield, the Prime Minister. After reading it, Lord Beaconsfield learn-

edly expounded to the Cabinet the difference between a truce and an armistice. He also gave an erudite account of the means by which various European wars in the past had been ended, which thoroughly awed the Cabinet. Their equilibrium was restored only when they learned the source of Beaconsfield's information.<sup>22</sup>

At present the full time of two men and the part-time of three others is spent in this task and, on the average, 120 memoranda are prepared a year.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE FOREIGN OFFICE REGISTRY

The Library is responsible for the Foreign Office Registry—the first duty of which is to open and file correspondence.

The Opening Branch of the Registry opens all incoming documents and places each document inside a jacket showing to which geographic department it belongs. Telegrams in code are delivered direct to the Communications Department, while letters and dispatches in a foreign language other than in French are at once sent to the translator, who, after translation, returns them to the Opening Branch.<sup>24</sup>

The Archives Branch of the Registry is responsible for giving documents a number and classification and for preparing a summary or *précis* of the dispatches concerned, which is glued to the jacket in which the document is circulated. Thus when the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs receives a jacket containing documents concerning a pending question, he may see at a glance what its contents are by reading the *précis* on the cover. All documents are entered in a "Diary," and a record is kept of the movement of these documents throughout the office. They are sent from department to department in dispatch boxes equipped with lock and key and marked by a tab indicating their destination and their source. A box carrying a red tab requires urgent attention.

19. The *Foreign Office List* is an unofficial publication, edited by members of the Foreign Office and the Foreign Service, but published by Harrison and Sons.

20. Up to the last two years. Dispatches for the current period remain in the various political departments.

21. Hertslet, Sir Edward. *Recollections of the Old Foreign Office*, p. 72.

22. Hertslet, *Ibid.* p. 200.

23. Memoranda on Chinese loans and railways are prepared in the Eastern Department.

24. There is no translation department in the Foreign Office; this work is performed by three clerks, usually in the evening, for which they receive a stipend.



The Archives Branch maintains a chronological file divided into an inward and outward section. The inward section files the *précis* of all entered documents; the outward section consists of a record of all outgoing communications. A Day Book is also kept; it is arranged as is the chronological file, but subdivided according to various countries.

The Archives Branch receives documents after they have been acted upon. It is responsible for their custody for two years. Thereafter they are sent to the Librarian's office. The Library keeps the papers for about twenty years in loose form at the end of which they are bound up. Ten years later they are taken out of the Foreign Office and sent to the Public Records Office.

In 1927 the receipts of documents in the Foreign Office totaled 146,611 and it is estimated that outgoing dispatches, including telegrams, are three times as great. These figures do not include the correspondence of the Passport Office or of the Department of Overseas Trade. Total receipts in 1913 were only 68,119—a figure which includes passport and commercial work. Thus the work of the Foreign Office has more than doubled since the beginning of the World War.

#### CONFIDENTIAL PRINT

One of the most important duties of the Registry is the preparation of the Confidential Print. Every day two or three hundred telegrams come into the Foreign Office, along with important dispatches. The most important telegrams are printed daily at a small printing establishment within the Foreign Office, at the direction of the Communications Department; the most important dispatches are similarly printed twice a week and circulated to departments, Cabinet ministers, embassies and legations at the direction of the heads of political departments. By this means the British Minister in China may follow the course of the naval negotiations between Great Britain and France. Every six months the Confidential Print is collected according to subject in a volume, such as "Egypt, 1926-1927," with an index.

#### THE ANNUAL INDEX

The Registry Office also prepares an annual index volume of all dispatches and documents entering and leaving the Foreign Office. Until publication this index is kept in the Main Index Branch of the Registry upon cards which total about one-half or three-quarters of a million per year. At the end of the year this index is printed in a large volume which usually appears eighteen months after the year covered by the volume has come to a close. The work connected with the publication of such an index is prodigious, costing between \$3,500 and \$4,000 a year. The volume covering the year "1924" contains 1,858 pages and represents the work of nine or ten men.

The index is one of the most valuable instruments in Foreign Office administration and will be of the utmost value to the historical student. Through the index it is possible to trace every document in a minimum of time.<sup>25</sup>

#### THE CHIEF CLERK

The Chief Clerk is one of the highest officials in the Foreign Office, holding the rank of Assistant Secretary of State. The machinery of the entire Diplomatic Service is kept oiled by the Chief Clerk's office, which is composed of two sections: the establishment or personnel section, for which the Chief Clerk is immediately responsible; and the finance and auditing section, headed by Finance Officer, holding the rank of Counsellor, who is really independent of the Chief Clerk in financial matters. Should differences arise between them—none have in fact arisen—they would presumably be settled by the Permanent Under Secretary. Under the Chief Clerk and Finance Officer are about twenty establishment and accounts officers, who handle respectively the details of establishment and finance.

The administrative work connected with

25. The Librarian also gives assistance to historical students; answers miscellaneous inquiries from British and foreign representatives as to British practice and law, if they are not of a political nature; legalizes and authenticates signatures upon documents for use abroad; and swears affidavits for use in court when the matter concerns the Foreign Office. To perform these various duties the office of the Librarian and Keeper of Papers has a staff of about 16 employees, in addition to these, the Registry has a staff of about 150 employees.

the appointment, promotion and transfer of the Estimates personnel, estimates, the annual finance account, representation allowances, housing, and auditing of foreign service accounts, all fall within this department.

#### THE FOREIGN OFFICE BUDGET

In October of every year a Treasury circular is sent to the Foreign Office giving instructions in regard to the preparation of the Foreign Office estimates for the fiscal year beginning the following April. The Finance Officer in consultation with the department concerned then draws up the estimates and sends them to the Treasury where they are examined. An official in the Treasury is charged with the responsibility of examining from year to year the Foreign Office estimates along with certain other services. He is therefore familiar with the administrative needs of the department.<sup>26</sup>

Certain difficulties in the past have arisen between the Foreign Office and the Treasury in regard to the size of the estimates. Before the World War the two departments negotiated over such questions through correspondence. Within recent years, however, the practice of informal discussion between officials of both departments has grown up, with the result that an agreement upon all questions is usually amicably reached. As a last resort the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may take differences to the Cabinet, but this is seldom done.

Although British administration has since the war been operating under a rigid economy régime, every suggestion to cut estimates by a fixed percentage, regardless of the administrative needs of the department concerned, has been rejected. The appropriations for the British Foreign Office in 1913-1914 were £67,868 in comparison with a total of £309,607 in 1928.<sup>27</sup>

26. In February of every year the House of Commons passes a Vote on Account; that is, it approves without debate about half of the money requested in the total estimates; the remainder is voted in the following summer, after the fiscal year begins, and usually after debate.

27. *Third Report of Committee on National Expenditure*, Cmd. 1589 (1922), Part XIV, Civil Estimates, 1928. In August 1914 the Foreign Office had 187 employees, by April 1923 it had 879 and the estimates for 1928 made provisions for 734. The newly created Passport Office absorbs the time of about 290 people. But apart from this office the Foreign Office staff is now nearly three times as large as the staff in 1914.

The Vote on Account for the Foreign Office consists largely of salaries as the following table shows:

	1928
A. Salaries, etc. ....	£268,509
B. Messengers' Salaries .....	16,339
C. Messengers' Travelling Expenses .....	19,500
D. Incidental Expenses .....	819
E. Telephones .....	2,640
F. News Department: Expenses .....	1,800
	<hr/> £309,607

Other expenses of the Foreign Office relating to office furniture, stationery, printing, pensions and supplies are borne by the Common Services and certain other accounts. The share of these Common Services, etc., appropriated for the Foreign Office is as follows:

A. Law Charges .....	£549
B. Office Accommodation, Furniture, Fuel and Light (Office of Works) .....	16,565
C. Rates .....	6,000
D. Publications, Parliamentary and Non-Parliamentary .....	3,500
E. Printing, Papers, Books, etc. ....	32,000
F. Office Supplies .....	2,000
G. Pensions Vote .....	12,201
H. Post Office (telegrams, etc.) .....	6,864
	<hr/> £79,679

Total expenditure .....£389,286

The Foreign Office thus costs the British people (excluding the Diplomatic and Consular Services) the sum of about \$1,946,000. From this sum should be subtracted passport and other fees amounting to £102,907, or \$510,000, making the net cost \$1,435,000.<sup>28</sup>

The vote of each governmental department is itemized in detail. That is, the Foreign Office estimates state the number of First Secretaries that should be employed and the total stipend they should receive. The Foreign Office, therefore, has very little discretion in varying the sums, once voted in the Estimates. The most flexible item is £7,000 for "unforeseen Missions and Services," which allows the government to send a delegation to unforeseen conferences without special authorization from Parliament.<sup>28a</sup>

28. The vote for Diplomatic and Consular Services totalled in 1928 £1,044,993, or about \$5,224,965.

28a. This item is included under Vote L, Class II, 2.

The Estimates also provide for £25,000 for "Journeys on the Public Service," which cover the travelling expenses of members of the Diplomatic Service.

The Foreign Office in common with other departments has access to secret funds voted by Parliament under the heading of Secret Service. The vote for this purpose in 1928

amounted to £180,000. The Prime Minister alone decides how this fund shall be expended, and is not accountable to Parliament in regard to it. As far as foreign relations are concerned, the fund is administered at the sole discretion of the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office, who can make payment without the knowledge of the Secretary of State.<sup>28b</sup>

## THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMERCIAL DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

Within the Foreign Office is the Consular Department which looks after administrative matters in connection with the Consular Service; it is partly under the administrative control of the Department of Overseas Trade. In so far as the commercial work of the Consular Service is concerned, the important body is the Department of Overseas Trade, an autonomous organization under the joint control of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade. The Department was established to do away with the conflicts which had arisen between the commercial attachés and the consuls and also to make better use of the commercial intelligence of the Consular Service.<sup>29</sup>

The Department of Overseas Trade has two main tasks: (1) the promotion of trade within the Empire and (2) the promotion of British trade abroad. For the first purpose it is represented in the Dominions and other parts of the Empire by Trade Commissioners; for the second purpose, by the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service. The Consular Department of the Foreign Office still handles the administrative detail connected with this service, but this department is partly under the control of the Department of Overseas Trade.

At the head of the department is a Par-

liamentary Under Secretary of the Board of Trade and a Parliamentary Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, one person holding both offices. The permanent head of the department is the Comptroller General. Under him are a Director, eight Assistant Directors, an Inspector-General of Overseas Services, seventeen senior intelligence officers and sixty-three intelligence officers. There are twenty other higher officers and clerks.

The department has the following divisions:

1. Empire, Trades and Economic Division
  - Engineering Section
  - Textile Section
  - Chemical and Electrical Section
  - Miscellaneous Trades Section
  - Central Section
  - Economic and Editorial Section
  - Statistical and Tariffs Sections
2. Foreign Division
  - Central European Section
  - American and Western Section
  - Eastern and Baltic and Balkans Section
3. General Division
  - City Section
  - Overseas Administrative Section
  - Library, Stationery and Enquiry Room
  - Establishment and Finance Sections
  - General Registry
4. Exhibitions and Fairs Division
5. Export Credits Guarantee Department

The estimates for the Department of Overseas Trade in 1928 amounted to £320,971. Excluding appropriations for the Commercial Diplomatic Service, the trade commissioner service, exhibitions and fairs, the export credits department, the cost of the Department of Overseas Trade in 1928 was £131,473. It employs a total personnel

<sup>28b</sup> Mr. Ponsonby, formerly Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, declared in the House of Commons, May 26, 1927, in regard to the Secret Service that "forgery, theft, lying, bribery, and corruption exist in every Foreign Office and every Chancellery throughout the world. . . ." *House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 206, col. 2258.

For Mr. Henderson's remarks about British spies at an international conference at Berne in 1919, and for Mr. Lloyd George's remarks about the Secret Service in general, cf. *Ibid.*, cols. 2296, 2230.

<sup>29</sup> In 1913 the grade of commercial attaché was abolished in favor of a Commercial Diplomatic Service composed of four Commercial Counsellors and 27 Commercial Secretaries. The salary, representation and rent allowance of the Counsellor is £2,250 a year. Members of the Commercial Diplomatic Service have diplomatic status and the Commercial Counsellor ranks next to the Counsellor of Embassy.

of 349 people, in comparison with 734 people in the Foreign Office.

At present the work of the Department of Overseas Trade is largely of an intelligence nature. Under its direction is published an excellent series of monographs describing the economic and financial conditions of the most important countries in the world, prepared usually by members of the Commercial Diplomatic Service. The department also goes through the consular reports and supplies information for the Board of Trade Journal. Perhaps its greatest usefulness to merchants consists of its special register service. Business firms are listed according to type of information which they desire. To be listed, each firm must pay a nominal fee. When, for example, the department receives information in regard to the porcelain trade in Argentina it is sent to the list of firms interested in this trade, which probably do not number more than thirty or forty, instead of to an indiscriminate list of merchants running into the thousands. The department also handles a large number of inquiries over

the telephone. It does not give out any figures as to the number of inquiries answered annually, on the ground that the importance to be attached to each inquiry varies so much that any statistical summary would be misleading.

The cost and activity of the Department of Overseas Trade has been the subject of many government inquiries. Also, the fact that it is under the joint control of the Board of Trade and the Foreign Office has been criticized on the ground of divided responsibility.<sup>30</sup> The theory back of the establishment of this Board is that responsibility for commercial intelligence should be concentrated in one department which may supply the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade with commercial information as the need arises. This theory seems to have worked out well in practice, but, from the standpoint of government machinery, the criticism may be made that the creation of a new department inevitably increases personnel and usually in greater numbers than if existing departments attempted to perform the same function.

### THE SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Having described the internal organization of the British Foreign Office, we shall now discuss the method by which the permanent officials in that office are selected. Originally appointment to the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service was a matter of patronage. A reform was made, however, in 1855 when the principle of "limited competition" for Foreign Office positions was introduced. The Secretary of State was obliged to fill positions from candidates who had successfully passed an examination. This system existed until 1907 when a Board of Selection, composed of Foreign Office and diplomatic representatives, was established to advise the Secretary of State, and when the Foreign Office examination was assimilated to that of the examination for the general civil service. The Board of Selection wielded an absolute veto over candidates, judging them upon the basis of an oral examination.

As a result of the recommendations of the

MacDonnell Commission, the Board of Selection was reorganized upon a wider basis.

At present candidates for the Foreign Office (or Foreign Service) must first appear before the Board of Selection, which meets the first Tuesday in May. As reorganized, the Board consists of the First Civil Service Commissioner, two representatives of the Foreign Office, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, one or two members of the House of Commons, and one other person of business repute.<sup>31</sup> The Board thus lost its diplomatic departmental character and represents many wider social and political points of view. Despite this fact criticisms are still made that the Board utilizes its authority to exclude from the Diplomatic Service sons of the English middle class.

30. *House of Commons Debates*, May 21, 1919, col. 497.

31. Cf. reply of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State to question by Mr. Maclean, *House of Commons Debates*, March 8, 1928. Col. 2120.



On the other hand, the Board has also excluded wealthy candidates who obviously had no serious intention in wishing to enter the service. During the last five years the Board has rejected about 36 per cent of the candidates, which is a much larger percentage than under the system existing in 1914.

Candidates may appear before the Board of Selection any time after reaching the age of nineteen; and if the Board does not recommend a candidate for acceptance he may not appear before the Board a second time unless specifically notified to this effect after his first appearance. A candidate recommended by the Board may proceed to the oral examination upon reaching the proper age; i.e., between twenty-two and twenty-five. Thus, unlike the American system, the candidate is given the oral examination first, and if he fails, he is relieved of the burden of preparing for a written examination. The written examination is given by the Civil Service Commission. It is the same as for the ordinary civil service,<sup>32</sup> except in regard to language.

The most important single subject in the examination is the *viva voce*, or oral examination, counting for 300 out of a total of 1900 marks. This examination was given by a committee of examiners in 1928 composed of the First Civil Service Commissioner as chairman, and a retired Indian official, a professor, a business man, a member of Parliament, and a woman active in public affairs. These examiners give the *viva voce* for candidates in all branches of the civil service, and examined 381 candidates for this purpose in the summer of 1928. During two days they examine Foreign Service candidates, and for this purpose they are assisted by two assessors from the Foreign Office—the Private Secretary for the Secretary of State and one of the Assistant Under Secretaries. There is no pass mark for the *viva voce* examination. That is, a candidate may receive only fifteen out of a possible 300 marks, but may by a brilliant written examination pass the examination as a whole. Nevertheless, the showing of the *viva voce* is usually decisive. Thus Diplomatic Service candidates are ob-

liged to submit to two oral examinations: the *viva voce* and the one by the Board of Selection.

In addition to the *viva voce*, candidates are obliged to take a written examination in the following subjects:

	Marks
1. Essay .....	100
2. English .....	100
3. Present day .....	100
4. Everyday Science .....	100
5. Auxiliary Language .....	100
6. European History .....	200
7. French Language .....	250
8. German Language .....	250 <sup>33</sup>
	<hr/> 1,200

In addition, candidates may choose up to a total of 400 marks other subjects from groups in history, economics, politics, law and philosophy, mathematics and science, English literature, languages and civilizations. There are about sixty-five different subjects within these various groups from which the candidate may choose, each subject usually counting 100 or 200 marks.

The written examination has at least three characteristics of interest. First, the candidate is examined in subjects which are general and cultural rather than technical or vocational in nature. While he may choose as one of his optional subjects, international law, economics or other subjects, he is not obliged to do so, but he is required to take subjects testing his general intellectual qualifications. While there is no specific ruling to this effect, the examination is such that every candidate must virtually be a university graduate.

Second, the questions asked upon these examinations are not capable of being answered by a simple "yes" or "no", nor are they questions involving detailed facts, statistics, or dates, which can be answered by a good memory. The questions are framed to test a man's reasoning power and judgment. The cramming which usually precedes ordinary factual examinations is to a large extent eliminated.

The Civil Service Commission has devised this type of examination with the aid of university professors expert in their respec-

<sup>32</sup> I.e., for the administrative group. Each candidate must pay a fee of £8.

<sup>33</sup> Beginning in July 1928 the pass mark in German was abolished.

tive fields. These professors not only prepare but also mark the papers, in return for fees. Thus the fee for setting the questions in the English essay examination is £2. For marking papers a professor is paid in certain subjects the sum of 33s 4d per candidate-hour; i.e., if the examination lasts three hours, the professor will receive three times this amount. The function of the Civil Service Commission is limited to equalizing markings between the severe and the lenient professors. The result of thus employing universities to prepare questions is much more satisfactory than having them prepared by either Foreign Office officials or civil service commissioners.

Third, the examination emphasizes clarity of expression and composition. The English examination is a "test of the understanding of English and the workmanlike use of words." The candidate is advised to be concise "with order and due proportion in the construction, and accuracy in the phrasing and wording." In this particular examination the candidate is asked to summarize in fifty words a passage about a thousand words in length upon the solar system. In the present day examination the candidate is asked to be careful in regard to punctuation and paragraphing.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the candidate is generally warned that if his handwriting is not easily legible, a further deduction in marks will be made on that account, and such a deduction may be "considerable."

As a result of this emphasis upon style, which continues during service in the Foreign Office and in the field, the diplomatic drafting of the British Government has won an enviable reputation for clarity, preciseness and dignity.

Finally, the examination for the Diplomatic Service emphasizes a knowledge of foreign language. In addition to the ordinary examination in an "auxiliary language," Foreign Service candidates have been required to pass severe tests in French and in German. So difficult are these language examinations that it has been the

practice of candidates to reside abroad several years studying French and German.<sup>35</sup>

According to an anonymous but apparently official writer, this language qualification "rules out nearly all boys who have not been at the best public schools or been able to have the advantage of the best private teachers either at home or abroad."<sup>36</sup> This qualification also works against boys who have no aptitude for language. Although French may be essential to a diplomatic career, one wonders why a knowledge of this language or at least German cannot be perfected after entry into the Diplomatic Service. This principle is followed in regard to certain languages in other branches of the civil service. For these reasons, the abolition of the special language tests in the Foreign Service examination has been frequently advocated.

The Foreign Office is obliged to appoint to a vacancy the candidate who stands highest in the examination; it has no discretion in the matter. On the receipt of a certificate from the civil service commissioners, a candidate is granted a commission as Third Secretary in the Diplomatic Service or Foreign Office. His service is regarded as probationary for two years. At the end of five years, including the probationary period, Third Secretaries are eligible for commissions as Second Secretaries, and promotion to this rank is usually automatic. Promotion to the rank of First Secretary depends upon the number of vacancies, and usually takes place upon the basis of seniority. Promotion to the rank of Counsellor likewise depends upon the number of vacancies, and it is in the filling of this rank only that individual merit, rather than seniority, has the right of way. The higher positions in the Foreign Office and Foreign Service are also filled, as a rule, from the rank of Counsellors. A diplomatic official seldom spends his life in the service as a Secretary or even as a Counsellor. When he finds that he cannot qualify for the higher positions, it is customary for him to resign. Naturally the ministerial and ambassa-

34. Cf. Pamphlet containing the Question Papers and Tables of Results of the competitions held in 1927 for the recruitment of services of the Administrative Group, Civil Service Commission, 1927.

35. Cf. the testimony of Sir Ronald Lindsay and others, Cd. 7749, Question 41,405.

36. "Changes in the Organization of the Foreign and Diplomatic Services," *British Year Book of International Law*, 1920-1921.

dorior posts are more limited in number than the counsellor and secretarial positions.

#### PROMOTIONS

In determining promotions the Foreign Office does not attempt to keep any detailed efficiency records of its diplomatic personnel, as is done under some civil service systems. Nor does it grade the reports of such men as if they were school examinations. Promotion is based upon the general impression of a man's worth formed by his superiors.

Promotions within the Foreign Service and the Foreign Office until recently rested with the Private Secretaries of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Under Secretary of State. The former was responsible for promotions in the service, the latter for promotions in the Foreign Office. This system in which the control of promotions was vested in the hands of theoretically subordinate officials was frequently criticized. And apparently as a result of the recommendations of the MacDonnell Commission<sup>37</sup> a Board of Promotions has been established which makes recommendations to the Secretary of State. It is composed of the Permanent Under Secretary of State, the Deputy and Assistant Under Secretaries of State, and the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State.

Any member of the Foreign Office or the Diplomatic Service may aspire to the highest positions in the service. Except for a few cases, such as that of Lord Bryce who served as Ambassador at Berlin, of Lord Crewe at Paris and of Lord d'Abernon at Berlin, ambassadors and ministers as well as the Under Secretaries of State rise from the ranks.<sup>38</sup> At present professional diplomats occupy all ten of the ambassadorial posts in the British service.

#### SALARIES AND PENSIONS

The salaries of the Foreign Office personnel have already been listed.<sup>39</sup> Members of the Foreign Office receive the same salaries as members of the Diplomatic Service except that they receive £100 less a year and do not receive any representation or rent allowances on the theory that it costs

less to live at home than in a diplomatic post abroad. On the other hand, members of the Foreign Office, as in the case of members of other branches of the civil service, receive a cost of living bonus. This bonus is adjusted every six months in accordance with changes in prices. On salaries of £500 the bonus in the summer of 1928 amounted to about £170, or a third of the salary. The bonus decreases proportionately with the size of the salary, and no bonus is paid at all upon salaries of and above £1,000.

In December 1928 the House of Commons passed the first two readings of a bill whereby members of the Foreign Office benefit from the provisions of the Superannuation Acts which regulate the pensions of civil servants. Under these acts a civil servant receives on retirement after not less than ten years' service (1) a pension calculated at the rate of 1/80th of his salary for each year served subject to a maximum of 40/80ths; and (2) a lump sum calculated at the rate of 1/30th of his salary for each year served, subject to a maximum of 45/30ths.<sup>40</sup>

#### STABILITY OF PERSONNEL

As a result of the system of examination, promotion, compensation and pensions and of the whole tradition of the British civil service, the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service have achieved a high degree of continuity and stability. Proof of this may be found in the fact that there are only two or three vacancies a year in the Diplomatic Service.<sup>41</sup>

Members of the service look upon it as a career. For example, Mr. Edmund Hammond served as Permanent Under Secretary of State from 1854 to 1873. Upon his retirement he was given a pension of £2,500 a year and elevated to the peerage.<sup>42</sup> Thomas Bidwell served as Chief Clerk—a highly responsible position—from 1767 to 1817; while Richard Ancell served as Librarian for thirty-three years, beginning in 1777. Within recent years the turnover of important posts in the Foreign Office has been more frequent. In fact, it is now a custom

37. Cd. 7748, p. 20.

38. Several ambassadors have been appointed from the Consular Service, such as Sir William White, Ambassador to Constantinople, and Sir Ernest Satow, Ambassador to Japan.

39. Cf. p. 460.

40. Cf. "Superannuation" (Diplomatic Service), *Memorandum on the Financial Resolution*. Cmd. 3041. 1928.

41. Including the Foreign Office, but not the Consular Service.

42. Hertslet, *op. cit.*, p. 129.



that the Permanent Under Secretaryship should be held for only four years. This has not, however, affected the principle of continuity because the occupant for the time being of a given post has spent a lifetime within the service, while holding different positions. The present head of the Foreign Office, Sir Ronald Lindsay, entered the Diplomatic Service in 1898, at the age of twenty-one, and has held eleven different posts—most of which have been abroad. Sir William Tyrrell, former permanent head of the Foreign Office entered the service in 1889, at the age of twenty-three. He has spent most of his life in the Foreign Office.

Whether or not because of these methods of selection, the personnel of the British Foreign Service has been recruited almost exclusively from a narrow social class. Between 1908 and 1913 sixty-seven per cent of the successful diplomatic candidates came from the most exclusive "public school," Eton, while the remainder came from other more expensive public schools.<sup>43</sup>

#### CRITICISM OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE

The object of the reforms in regard to Foreign Office administration enacted in 1920-1921 was to broaden the social basis of the Foreign Service. It was expected by some observers, at least, that the abolition of the income requirement and the new composition of the Board of Selection would change the type of person entering the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service. An examination of the annual reports of the Civil Service Commission shows that between 1923 and 1927 there were twenty-three successful candidates in the diplomatic examinations. Eton, Wellington and Harrow each contributed three of these candidates, which shows that the predominance of Eton men has declined. Nevertheless, all of the candidates still come from the more expensive public schools and all of them have been graduates of Oxford or Cambridge. It does not seem, therefore, that the class of men entering the service has materially changed.

The criticism is still made therefore that

the personnel of the Foreign Office is undemocratic and that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a youth having the antecedents of the labor party behind him to enter the office and rise to a responsible position. The "exclusive" nature of the Foreign Office and Service has frequently been defended on the ground that "if men with a certain kind of upbringing and education make the best diplomats, it is their service which the country should seek for its diplomatic affairs."<sup>44</sup>

Foreign Office and diplomatic officials lacking the social amenities of the English gentleman could not, it is claimed, maintain the position of the Empire abroad, nor win the respect from other governments which a diplomatic representative should receive.

On the other hand, a number of groups in England<sup>45</sup> believe that a professionalized and exclusive diplomatic personnel is in touch with a limited social group, whether at home or abroad, and is not sympathetic with or even well-informed in regard to important democratic movements of great national and international significance. Members of this group declare that in an emergency a non-professional diplomatic official has been found in many cases to exercise better judgment and common sense and even courage than at least some professional diplomats. They believe that at the outbreak of the World War the diplomatic services (including the Foreign Offices) of various governments would have been better informed in regard to the causes of the war and the policies that various governments would follow, had they contained a less professional or at least a more democratic element. These critics also believe that a professional diplomatic personnel is in danger of deteriorating intellectually, if not morally, unless periodically brought back to the Foreign Office for a term of years, or replaced by new blood. They state that there is a danger that a professional diplomatic service will fall under the control of a clique and that such control is more objectionable than the influence of a political

44. *The views of Mr. Hoar*, Cd. 7748, p. 46.

43. Cd. 7784, p. 15. A "public school" in England is a private school in the American sense; the nearest approach to it in this country are such schools as Groton and Andover.

45. Cf. the statement of the Liberal Foreign Affairs group of the House of Commons, 1912, and *Mr. Arthur Ponsonby's Memorandum*, Cd. 7749, p. 320.



party upon appointments and promotions, simply because it is more permanent.<sup>46</sup>

These criticisms of the professional Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service in England are naturally not shared in official circles, and they probably represent the

views of only a minority of observers. Nevertheless, the fact should be emphasized that opinion in England is by no means unanimous that a professional diplomatic service and Foreign Office is superior to a non-professional service.

### THE FRANC CASE

Basis for some criticism against certain Foreign Office officials was found in the famous franc case which caused a stir in England in 1928. In this case officials were accused of using official information to advance private financial speculations; they were likewise accused of publishing the famous Zinovieff letter for the same purpose and also to discredit the political party in power. While the board of commissioners did not find these officials guilty of these charges, it did hold them guilty for other offenses.

During the lawsuit of a brokerage house to recover from a Mrs. Dyne certain sums, the fact was revealed that a number of Foreign Office officials had been speculating in foreign exchange. This led the government to appoint a Special Board of Enquiry, composed of three civil servants, to consider whether these officials had made use of any official knowledge in these transactions and whether, even if they did not, the transactions were proper or becoming in the case of a civil servant. After holding twenty-four meetings at which it examined a large number of witnesses, the board came to the conclusion that these Foreign Office officials had gambled in foreign currencies, and that they had lost heavily over the period in question. The fact of loss did not, however, affect the validity of the transaction.

No hard and fast rule may be laid down, the board declared in its report, on the subject of gambling transactions by civil servants. The propriety of such transactions "must necessarily depend to some degree upon the circumstances of the case. . . But of these circumstances, one of the most material to be considered is without doubt the functions of the Department in which

he is employed. Thus Civil Servants employed in certain Departments will plainly come under a special obligation to be discreet and careful in all their private financial transactions; the Treasury is pre-eminently one such Department, the Foreign Office is a second, and the Revenue Departments and the Post Office are others. We think that the opportunity of turning official information to private gain is likely to be much less frequent in the Foreign Office than, for instance, in the Treasury, but that such opportunities occur from time to time in most Departments there can be no doubt whatsoever; and where this is so, and indeed we might say, so long as the public, whether rightly or wrongly, believe it to be so, Civil Servants engaged in those Departments cannot and ought not to expose themselves, their Departments or the Civil Service at large to public criticism by gambling or by rash and hazardous speculation. . ."<sup>47</sup>

The board went on to say, however, that it was satisfied that the Foreign Office officials "neither used, nor endeavored to use, any official information for the purpose of their transactions." Nevertheless, it was of the opinion that a "course of speculative transactions such as we have described above ought never to have been entered upon by any Civil Servant. Least of all ought foreign exchange speculations to have been undertaken by those to whom, from the nature of their work, the sensitiveness and suspicions of foreign countries with regard to such dealings in their currency cannot have been unfamiliar. . . The State is entitled to demand that its servants shall not only be honest in fact, but beyond the reach of suspicion of dishonesty." A civil servant must order his private affairs as

46. The charge has frequently been made that the British Foreign Office has been under the control of Roman Catholic officials who have filled the positions of Private Secretary and Under Secretary of State, and important posts in the field. Today, however, this influence seems to be much less than before.

47. Report of the Board of Enquiry appointed by the Prime Minister to Investigate certain Statements affecting Civil Servants, Cmd. 3037, p. 9.

not "to allow the suspicion to arise that a trust has been abused or a confidence betrayed." Where a civil servant is "employed in any Department to which, whether rightly or wrongly, the public attributes the power of obtaining special information, such as the future course of political or financial events likely to affect the rise and fall of markets, then we assert unhesitatingly that participation in such transactions is not only undesirable or inexpedient, but wrong. . ."<sup>48</sup>

As a result of this inquiry the Secretary

of State for Foreign Affairs directed that the Assistant Secretary of State of the Foreign Office be dismissed from the service; that another member be permitted to resign, and that another be severely reprimanded and forfeit three years' seniority.

Perhaps the most widely expressed criticism of the Foreign Office is that the permanent officials have too much influence upon policy. To understand this criticism the procedure in the formulation of policy must first be outlined.

### THE FORMULATION OF POLICY

When a dispatch enters the Foreign Office it is sent, after being registered, to the political department concerned. Here it is studied by a diplomatic secretary and, if action of importance is required, the head of the political department will "minute" the dispatch. In this "minute" he defines the possible courses of action and usually makes a definite recommendation. In preparing this minute he may avail himself of research done by the Library. This minute may be sent to the Legal Adviser for his comments. The minutes of the department head and of the Legal Adviser then go to the Assistant or Deputy Under Secretary of State having supervision of the department concerned. If he desires further information, he does not undertake an independent investigation of the facts, but asks for such information from the department concerned. His function is merely to pass judgment upon the proposals submitted. The papers then go to the Permanent Under Secretary of State, who may write a minute on important questions to the Secretary of State. When the latter official initials his own or any other official minutes the office may proceed to carry it out without further reference to him.<sup>49-50</sup>

In theory the Secretary of State and the Parliamentary Under Secretary are responsible for the final formulation of policy. And upon clear-cut questions, such as the recognition of Russia or the Geneva Protocol, they are little influenced by the ad-

vice of the permanent officials. But in regard to questions which have not entered the arena of party politics, or which arise after the government comes into power—and these may embrace the majority of questions before the Foreign Office—the influence of the permanent officials may be decisive. In deciding policy upon such questions, the head of a department usually gets his way if the department does its work well and presents a convincing case. The view of the minister upon incoming dispatches from foreign governments may be colored by the marginal comments written on such dispatches by professional subordinates.<sup>51</sup>

### THE ZINOVIEFF LETTER

Perhaps the most vivid example of the influence of permanent officials was shown in the case of the famous Zinovieff letter. This letter, urging Communists in England to revolt, was published by the Foreign Office and had a disastrous effect upon the election held shortly thereafter, driving the MacDonald government out of power. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the question was once raised whether in publishing a letter which obviously injured him politically, the Foreign Office had been disloyal or acted without his consent.

The Zinovieff letter reached the Foreign

48. *Ibid.* p. 21, 22. The board declared that they could find no evidence that Mr. Gregory, the Assistant Secretary, had engineered the publication of the Zinovieff letter for financial purpose, cf. below.

49-50. Viscount Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. II, p. 260.

51. For such marginal comments cf. *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, Vol. III, p. 420 ff. A German critic states that the permanent officials constantly supported, through such comments, a pro-French and pro-Russian point of view, which inevitably influenced the Minister, Sir Edward Grey. Cf. Count Montgelas, *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, p. 102, 106, 124.

Office on October 10, and Mr. Gregory, Assistant Under Secretary of State, wrote in a minute to Sir Eyre Crowe, Permanent Under Secretary, "I very much doubt the wisdom of publication. The authenticity of the document would at once be denied." Sir Eyre Crowe took a different view and recommended to Mr. MacDonald that the document be published. Mr. MacDonald was out of the office on an election tour and a copy of the letter with Sir Eyre Crowe's minute reached him on the 16th. Mr. MacDonald minuted that "the greatest care would have to be taken in discovering whether the letter was authentic or not. If it was authentic it had to be published at once, and in the meantime, while investigations were going on to discover the authenticity of the letter, the draft letter to Rakovski<sup>52</sup> would be prepared, so that, when the authenticity was established, no time would be lost in making our protest to the Soviet Government."<sup>53</sup>

Sir Eyre Crowe now proceeded to satisfy himself that the letter was authentic. On the 21st, he forwarded to Mr. MacDonald the draft of a letter prepared originally by the Assistant Under Secretary. Mr. MacDonald, who was still away, extensively revised the draft, but whether intentionally or through an accident, he did not initial it. He returned the draft to the Foreign Office on the 24th and on the same day Sir Eyre Crowe, believing that he had MacDonald's approval, sent the letter to the Soviet Chargé, and gave a copy of the Zinovieff letter to the press.

In a debate upon this incident, Mr. MacDonald declared to the House of Commons that the permanent officials in the Foreign Office assumed that they were carrying out his "wishes in taking immediate steps to publish the whole affair. They honestly believed that the document was authentic and upon that belief they acted." Nevertheless, Mr. MacDonald did not initial the letter and apparently he had not intended that Sir Eyre Crowe should decide, without further consulting him, whether or not the letter was authentic. Moreover, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, was in the office during this en-

tire incident, but he was not consulted as to the authenticity of the letter nor the action to be followed.

In most departments in the British Government the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State is an important official and when the Minister is away he takes charge. In the Foreign Office this rule is not followed. When the Minister is away, the Permanent Under Secretary usually takes charge.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary does not have charge of any department and no papers are minuted to him. His influence depends very much upon his own personality. Apparently his major responsibility is the defense of the Cabinet's foreign policy in the House of Commons.<sup>54</sup>

#### THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Thus the one important political official in the Foreign Office is the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Obviously, it is difficult for him to form his own opinion upon each question of policy as it arises. The burden of work has increased within recent years; first, because of the necessity of constant consultation with the Dominions; and second, because of the establishment of the League and the development of new international problems. The Foreign Minister now goes to Geneva four times a year and every day he must give interviews to ministers and ambassadors from other countries. Until the time of Sir Edward Grey, it was customary for a peer to occupy the post of Foreign Secretary and he was not obliged to participate in debates in the House of Commons. But that time has gone, and the Minister is now obliged to participate in many evening debates and then to go home and work over diplomatic dispatch boxes marked with a red tab.<sup>55</sup>

So heavy has the burden of the Foreign Office been that the last three Foreign Secretaries—Lord Curzon, Ramsay MacDonald, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, have been

52. Cf. Viscount Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. I, p. 2.

53. Cf. *House of Commons Debates*, December 15, 1924, Col. 690; and A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1924, p. 247.

55. For the daily routine of a Foreign Secretary, cf. Viscount Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. II, Chapter XXX. When Lord Curzon was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he wrote to Lady Curzon, "Last night I had my solitary dinner, and then twenty-seven boxes—the record up to date." A month later he wrote, "From now until 2 a. m. I shall not leave this house, but try to pull up some of my arrears." Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. III, p. 203.

worn out by their tasks. And tired men do not always make wise decisions. Commenting on the situation in the Foreign Office, the London *Times* has recently said, "To enable Ministers to keep the freshness so essential if vision, resolution, perspective, and love of work are to be preserved—this is one of the most insistent problems of democratic government."<sup>56</sup>

In order to relieve the Foreign Secretary of some of the work connected with the League of Nations a special League Minister has been created. The member of the Cabinet appointed as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster now assists the Secretary of State with all League business and replaces him at the Assembly or Council when he cannot attend. Under the Labor government this minister had a room in the Foreign Office; it is understood that he now sits in the Treasury but keeps in close touch with the Foreign Office, has a Foreign Office private secretary, and receives papers from the Foreign Office, including the confidential print. When Sir Austen Chamberlain became ill, it was this League Minister—Lord Cushendun—who was chosen as Acting Secretary of State.

Despite the Cabinet assistance, the Secretary of State is still weighed down by an overwhelming burden of business. And he must therefore in a large number of matters rely implicitly upon the permanent officials who, whether as private secretaries or as department heads, literally surround him.<sup>57</sup>

Now, obviously (especially in view of the social class from which they come), the permanent officials cannot always have the same philosophy or outlook upon public affairs as does each Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This divergence is likely to be greater when a labor government is in

power. Nevertheless, because of the overwhelming predominance of the official class the general views of the Minister may sooner or later give way in many matters to the views of his subordinates. It is a case of one man against a hundred. When their chief gives an order the permanent officials loyally carry it out, but probably in the majority of cases the Minister in deciding what the order should be is at the mercy of his staff having a radically different outlook from his own. This problem is really one aspect of the problem of Parliamentary responsibility and the proposal has frequently been made that such responsibility should be increased by the establishment of a House of Commons committee on foreign affairs which the Foreign Office should constantly consult.<sup>58</sup>

The introduction into the Foreign Office of the continental *cabinet* system has also been proposed. When a foreign minister comes into office in France or in Belgium he brings with him a *cabinet* of private secretaries. These secretaries are usually students of foreign affairs, and, what is of more political importance, they know the general outlook of their chief and of the party to which he belongs. Every proposal made by a permanent official is studied thoroughly by a member of the *cabinet* and in making a decision the foreign minister looks to the opinion of the *cabinet* as well as to the opinion of the permanent official. By this system, every suggestion of the permanent official is subject to close scrutiny by a political representative of the minister.

This balancing of the expert against the political amateur is a problem which has not yet been solved in Great Britain any more than it has in the United States where indeed conditions are reversed.

56. "The Foreign Secretary's Work," *The Times* (London), November 28, 1928.

57. The position of private secretary is of importance, and is filled by men of experience—usually in the case of the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State or to the Under Secretary of State holding the rank of Counsellor or First Secretary. Sir Eric Drummond and Sir William Tyrrell have both served as Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during important periods in their careers.

58. Flournoy, F. R., *Parliament and War*, p. 265.